Creekside Church of the Brethren

Connection

December 2026



The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it. John 1:5

There is plenty of darkness to go around in our world today. Certainly in the literal sense for those of us who live in the northern hemisphere and have been watching as the daylight hours get shorter with the sun coming up later and setting earlier each day. There are other kinds of darkness, too—perhaps not evil, but the darkness of uncertainty and inability to see clearly: war and climate change and politics and immigration and artificial intelligence are all part of a future we cannot yet discern.

Our Advent devotionals, "Finding Our Way," by Brethren pastor Anna Lisa Gross pick up on this theme of uncertainty, adaptation, and learning new ways of doing familiar things. These are all ways of being faithful in following Jesus, the light which shines in the midst of the darkness. Jesus did not come to affirm our comfortable ways of doing things, but to show us the way—even when it's a way we have not gone before.

Our worship themes for Advent are inspired by resources from Shine children's curriculum by Brethren Press which is intended to be used at home by families *(see more in this* Connection). Advent Sundays are Nov. 29 through Dec. 20. The children will be lighting candles each week for Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Each of these things are ways that we can shine as light in the darkness as we reflect the hope, peace, joy, and love of Christ. We hope that you will join us as we travel to Bethlehem to see the fulfillment of God's promises and the miracle of God in the form of a baby.

I know that some of you hang lights outside or put candles in the windows of your homes during the Christmas season. We do this at Creekside with an illuminated nativity scene, lighted evergreen tree in the Prayer Garden and candles in the windows of our Gathering Area. This is an assertion that the darkness has not overcome the light: every light, every candle flame makes a dent in the darkness, a small act of resistance and beauty. If you have lights visible from outside your home, please take a photo and send it to creeksidepastor@gmail.com. We will share the photos during Happenings on Sunday morning. If you are inspired by another light display, send a photo and let me know where it was taken. We hope these lights will be an inspiration to others at Creekside. We all need the reassurance that even when we see darkness all around, fear, grief and injustice do not have the last word. Jesus Christ, the baby in Bethlehem, is the light which defeats the darkness. Jesus is our hope, peace, joy, and love.

In Christ— *Pastor Rosanna*

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Creekside's Christmas Eve service will be Thursday, December 24 at 7:00 pm. It will include prayers, scripture reading, lots of Christmas music, communion, and candle lighting. You and your family, friends and neighbors are warmly invited to the service and fellowship time that follows. Childcare will be provided. The service will be done by 8:30 pm. We hope you can make a place in your celebrations to join us at Creekside to celebrate Jesus' birth on this holy night.

Pastor Rosanna, for Worship Team

PASTOR'S REPORT

There is typically a lot going on in November in the run-up to Advent decorating and planning. I was able to spend a few days at the beginning of the month at GilChrist retreat center in Three Rivers, MI to plan Advent resources, interspersed with some hiking and reading. Christian Ed Team is preparing activities and resources packets for children and families, Worship Team is planning and decorating indoors, and the New Life Sunday School class will be decorating outdoors. Thanks to Betty Snyder who is preparing a meal for us when we decorate on November 22.

Deb Kauffman and Diane Lund have done a terrific job of planning and preparing for the Cookie/Candy Walk on Dec 5 (*see more details in this* Connection). THANK YOU to all the volunteers who are donating their baking, candymaking, and ingredients for this festive event. As always, we are grateful for the support and expertise of admin. assistant Marita Barsoda, who has done design and printing and even sewn banners (!) for our worship services and events. We wish her safe travels as she goes to New York City with the Concord marching band and her daughter Kaylee over Thanksgiving.

I am grateful for the work of our Media volunteers, not only on Sunday mornings, but for special services such as the Celebration of Life for Wylan Shultz on November 7. It is a privilege to walk alongside families and to offer the hospitality and expertise of this congregation. We are grateful to Myrtis Justiniano, who donated 60 pieces of framed needlework to the church; the sale of that needlework has raised more than $2500 to go toward paying off Creekside's mortgage. The mortgage retirement team has been at work planning for the celebration June 26, 2027.

An underlying theme of the season for me is gratitude; I hope I have been able to communicate some of this during our November worship services. I am grateful for my family, church family, my work, and the work which we have been called to do together. May God bless you with a grateful heart and willing hands this season—
Pastor Rosanna

FROM THE CHURCH BOARD:

The Board met on November 17. As a reminder we will retire our mortgage debt at the end of 2026. Any donations beyond the amount of our mortgage and any donations after December 27 will go into Capital Improvement. Any balance after December 27 will be paid off from gifts received.

We are thankful to Kurt Vardaman for his past six years on the Board, and to Karen Snyder for serving the past 2 years on the Church Board. We also thank Deana Ward for her service the past 3 years and welcome Deana back on the Church Board as the new Treasurer for Creekside. We thank Roger Griffith for his past many years as Treasurer and welcome him as a Church Board member. We welcome Brynne Spiritoso and Jeff Borem to the Church Board, also. Mike Kauffman will remain as the Church Board chairperson and Roger Griffith will be the Church Board Vice Chairperson.

We moved to fund some additional SAWs needs and to fund recent and future BDM projects.

We discussed ways to continue the garden with the few volunteers we have and included many ideas for simplifying weeding and the possibility of fewer vegetables, maybe just tomatoes. We welcome ideas and commitments to garden work if we think this continues to be a good outreach for Creekside.

We have decided to move forward with cameras at the church covering vital areas outside thanks to the great feedback we received at the Congregational Business Meeting. We will be ordering these cameras soon and will include a sign letting persons know that cameras are on site.

January 10 is the next training date for Safety Facilitators after church. Tim McFadden is working on an agenda focused on Medical Alerts.

Sustainability Team will be meeting the last Tuesday of January, 2027.

Pastor Rosanna gave an update for Elim Pastor and family as they work with an immigration lawyer with the recent review of his asylum status.

We do not plan to meet in December; our next meeting is January 19th at 6:00 pm.

Mike Kauffman, Church Board Chair



COOKIE/CANDY WALK Saturday, December 5, 8:00-11:30

Our sale is three weeks from this Saturday! It's exciting to read the list of scrumptious holiday goodies on the sign-up sheet. Yum!
Volunteer sign-ups are also looking great. We are so appreciative of everyone's involvement. Below you can read what has been done and what is to come.

On November 16th 26.5 lbs. of Buckeyes were rolled, dipped, weighed and bagged! What a joyous time with many helpful volunteers. We extend a very special thank you to **Tim McFadden** for making the delicious buckeye filling.

A Special Update! **We are no longer in need of extra cookie sheets.**
Thank you to the Outreach Team for generously offering to provide wooden trays for us to use for displaying cookies. These will be saved for future Creekside use. *What a blessing it is* to have their partnership and ingenuity! Thanks to **Jason Ward and Roger Griffith** for their work!

Sunday, November 22nd Creekside kids will assemble DIY Kits to catch our young shoppers' eyes. **Jessica Prahl** will guide them in their creativity!

December 22nd at Creekside, we invite you to join us at 1 pm for Creekside Charley making. This has become a favorite candy that sells out quickly!

Preparation Strategy on December 5th
Because the *Cookie Crew* will be in and out of the kitchen bright and early Saturday December 5th hustling and bustling to finishing up last minute details, we ask that you have cookies/treats completely finished by Friday, December 4. If we don't use the kitchen Saturday, it will lessen the traffic and clean-up so we can open those doors on time!

Should you need assistance delivering by noon on Friday, please call Deb's number, 574-312-8251 and I or another person will be glad to lend a hand!

Thank you all so much; your kind support makes a huge difference!
Deb, Diane, Lodema, Anne W., the Cookie/Candy Walk Crew ***and Mama Sue… right?***



BRIGHT LIGHTS, HOLY NIGHTS

Bright Lights, Holy Nights is something new for families to use at home in the days of Advent. From Christmas Bingo cards to color and play the game as a family, to ideas for a birthday party for Jesus, and a paper string of lights to color for each day leading up to Christmas, there are fun things for kids and youth to do. There are even a few gift cards and a couple Christmas Cards to use.

I am looking forward to trying the paper chain with my grandkids. Each of the paper links in the chain has a question relating to Christmas that each person in the family can take a turn answering. We may try one piece of the chain at supper each evening. It will be fun to hear the kids' answers and for them to hear their parents' and even their grandparents' answers.

The kit will be given to parents, around the beginning of Advent, Sunday, Nov. 29th. Jessica Prahl, our Christian Ed coordinator, is preparing the kits to be complete with everything a family might need to try the activities. We hope you have fun with the projects!

Judy De Pue & the CE Team

CHRISTIAN ED ANNOUNCEMENT:

The curriculum we use for Sunday School in the 1st grade through 8th grade classes has something new this year. The kids have take-home activities that coordinate with their Sunday School lessons. Each child and youth will be given a bag of their own in which to carry home their activity booklet and then bring it back to church each Sunday. That way, each 1st through 8th grader can try some of the activities during the week and even do some of them during the worship service at church on Sunday. Older kids who have been given their own youth Bible can carry it back and forth in the bag, as well. These activities booklets will be given out throughout the school year.

ADVENT OFFERING

We are grateful for your giving toward Creekside's programs in 2026. For the past few years we have used Advent as an opportunity to give to ministry partners who do work in our community, in our region, and in the world. This year the Church Board and Outreach Team have selected three organizations to share our Advent offering with. Gifts will be split equally between the three of them. They are Church Community Services, Camp Alexander Mack, and Heifer, International. These are organizations which we have supported in the past and may already be familiar to you. We will be highlighting one organization per Sunday beginning in December.

If you wish to make a donation over and above your regular giving to Creekside, please mark Advent or Love Offering on your offering envelope, the memo line of your check, or in the comment section for online donations. We will accept donations for these organizations through December 27, the last Sunday of 2026. Thank you for your generosity, and God bless you.

Pastor Rosanna, for Church Board and Outreach

WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

Wintry weather is a part of living in N. Indiana or SW Michigan. We are grateful to our Property Team for making Creekside's parking lot and sidewalks as safe as possible, but depending on the timing of frozen precipitation, we may need to cancel services on a Sunday morning.

We will not contact you if services are proceeding as usual. If we are **canceling** services, that decision will be made no later than 8:00 am Sunday morning. We will decide sooner if the forecast allows us to do so. Here's how to get information about a cancellation:

- Check the front page of Creekside's website: creeksidecob.com
- We will send a One Call Now message by phone, text, and email. If you do not currently receive messages through One Call Now, you must opt in to be included on a weather cancellation list. You may do this by contacting the Creekside office and providing the contact information you want us to use: phone call, email, text message or any combination of those three.
- Call Pastor Rosanna at home. I'd prefer this not be your first option. If we ***are*** having worship, I may not be available after 8:30 am.

When we ARE having worship on a snowy day, here are some things to be aware of:

- We will try to provide valet parking; look for the green flag in front of the stone pillars. Pull up to the front doors and someone will park your car for you.
- If conditions do not seem safe in your area, please do not venture out. You are always welcome to watch the livestream at YouTube.com/CreeksideCoB —our Media Team does a great job. If worship is cancelled, there will not be a service to watch.

Please contact the office (before the next snowstorm, if possible!) if you have questions.

Thank you and stay safe!
Pastor Rosanna, for Property Team and office

TRIVIA from Creekside's Mortgage Retirement Team

First, the answers to the November trivia: the Creekside property is on 19 acres. Some of our ministries that are "grounded" here include the *Seed to Feed* garden, the *container garden* project, the *Prayer Garden*, and *labyrinth.*

Sometimes during special services at Creekside--such as Christmas Eve or funerals--the Worship Center is full and we provide overflow seating in the Gathering Area. Do you know why our building committee limited the seating capacity of the sanctuary to 299?
Look for the answer in the January Creekside Connection.

Save the date of June 26, 2027 at Creekside to celebrate our mortgage retirement.

The Bee Line

I hope you all had a chance to read Ron's Bee Line last month. You DID, didn't you?

This month's Bee Line will be short and sweet… not as sweet as honey, though.

Tom and George came in October to remove the hive boxes with honey to be harvested. Ron and I were there to observe. (They work so fast that we'd be in the way trying to help.) Of the six hives, there were two that were deserted and infected with hive beetles. We were told that wasn't unusual given the rainy weather we had been having. The other four had good frames with plenty of honey that they took with them to extract.

They prepared the remaining hives for winter.

Fast forward to the middle of November and we are down to **one** hive. George found that the three new hives they left behind were empty. In his words (I'm told), "It's like they were never there."

We will have honey to bottle but not as much as we were expecting or hoping for. Because of the early deadline for the *Creekside Connection*, we don't know yet how much will be available for sale at the Cookie Walk.

We all hope you have a blessed Christmas and the Bee Team will be hoping that we can find a couple able-bodied volunteers for a happy, and prosperous, New Year. (I'm hoping Santa can bring me a new bee suit.)

Bee Happy!
Steve Barton, for the Bee Team

A NOTE FROM EVERENCE

Everence asked some of their financial planners "What did your parents teach you about money?" Here are three responses:
"Understand the difference between needs and wants."
– Ryan Eakins, Financial Planner
"I think the single biggest thing I learned from my parents about money was regarding generosity. They taught me that everything we have is a gift from God and stewarding it well and living a life of generosity is one of the ways we model following Jesus."
– Shawn Persing, Dir. Of Financial Planning.
"When I was a kid and told my parents I needed something, Dad's response was often, 'Do you need that or do you just want it?' Understanding the difference was one of the most important things I learned about managing money responsibly."
– Lyle Miller, Stewardship Consultant.
Good food for thought.

Larry Ford, Everence Advocate for Creekside

DECEMBER 2026

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

BIRTHDAYS

5 Ellis, Donald
10 Metcalf, Bryce
12 De Pue, Stephen
12 Kauffman, Deb
18 Zehr, Suzanne
22 Neal, Roger
25 Bollinger, Grace
29 Stutsman, Mike
31 Garcia, Devereaux

ANNIVERSARIES

15 Kauffman, Mike & Deb
20 Foland, Ted & Lynne
28 Rodgers, Rick & Valerie

EVENTS

2 Chocolate Charlie making, 1-3 pm
3 Wrapping trays, 9-11 am, 1-3 pm
4 Cookie Candy Walk set-up
5 Cookie Candy Walk, 8-11:30 am
8 Brunch at Angel's, 10:45 am
11 Game Night, 7:00 pm
19 *Church reserved, 8:30 am-1:00 pm*
24 Christmas Eve Service, 7:00 pm



The Creekside Connection

A publication of ***Creekside Church of the Brethren***

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The Creekside Connection is published monthly to keep members and friends informed of church programs and to report news about the people of Creekside Church.

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